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Elections In Punjab

Why And Why Not?

By A.S. Narang

The Union Minister Mr. Buta Singh has announced that Parliamentary elections in Punjab will be held along with other parts of the country. But elections to the State Assembly may not take place for some time for indefinitely. He has also observed that in view of amendments in the People's Representation Act the Akali Dal may not be allowed to contest elections.

According to political observers both these observations of the Home Minister are inter-linked and much of his party's continuous attitude of giving preference to party's interest over those of the nation.

The announcement that Parliamentary elections will be held in the State obviously means that the government believes that the law and order situation in Punjab is

conducive for conducting of elections. If it is so then why Assembly elections cannot be held. Obvious implication is that on elected government may not be able to deal with the prevailing problem of terrorism. However, most of the impartial observers feel that all events in Punjab point out towards the fact that President's rule in Punjab has in no way been able to deal with the situation better than the elected government. In fact it has contributed in worsening of the situation by alienating various sections of population in the absence of elected representatives providing a channel between the government and the people and by making the administration and law and order agencies are oppressive methods to show quick results without realising their long-term counter-productive consequences.

Democratic Process

All reasonable opinions have been suggesting that

Assembly elections in Punjab will not only throw open the democratic process but also a representative leadership, be it of any party, to enter into a dialogue. All these years centre government's complaint has been whom to talk?

But this is not acceptable; probably the atmosphere is not conducive for Congress (I) victory in the state. Since Punjab has only 13 seats in Lok Sabha and even if a majority of these are won by the opposition it may not make much difference for formation of government at the Centre. Thus elections for Parliament in the State can be afforded and claims for an improved law and order situation under President's rule made irrespective of the fact of tremendous increase in deaths since its imposition. The day Congress (I) feels atmosphere favourable for it Assembly Elections can also be held.

Restricting The Akalis

Union Home Minister's observation about debarring the

Akalis from contesting elections is also part of this game. Under the amended People's Representation Act political parties have to get themselves registered with the Election Commission. Condition for that is declaration in their constitutions a faith in secularism democracy and socialism. All decisions in this regard are to be taken by the Election Commission which is a statutory independent body.

How can Home Minister comment on the likely decision of the commission? One fails to understand..

Second, as far as Akalis are concerned it should not be difficult for them to include this faith in their constitution. They have committed themselves to these values many a times. In fact even the Anandpur Sahib Resolution refers to them. How Mr. Buta Singh presumes that the Akali's will not do so? One again fails to understand.

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'Haleemi Raj' Will Not Come Through Bullets

By K.S. Khosla

The news about two resolutions passed at the conference of the All India Sikh Students Federation (Manjit Singh group) held in observance of the fifth anniversary of Bluestar Operation on June 7 indicate a shift in the stand of an important group of militants and deserve special notice by the media and the authorities. Strangely, the English and Urdu newspapers ignored the proceedings of the conference altogether. Only the Punjabi newspapers published from Jalandhar and Chandigarh carried the proceedings of the conference.

According to "Ajit", a Punjabi daily published from Jalandhar,

the conference demanded the setting up of 'haleemi raj' according to the political traditions of the Akal Takht, supreme religious seat of the Sikhs. The resolution said that the conference was against the "present corrupt administration based on communal and caste considerations" and added that the establishment of a 'raj' based on the Sikh gurus, teachings and the ideal of social and political set-up as enshrined in Gurbani (hymns of the gurus) would remain the political aim of the Sikhs. "Ajit" noted, perhaps rightly, that this resolution was different from the demand for Khalistan voiced from Sarbat Khalsa meetings in the past.

In the second resolution, the conference demanded the establishment of 'Khalsa panchayats' in Punjab instead of the panchayats sought to be set up by the present government. "Punjabi Tribune", a

Punjabi daily published from Chandigarh, noted that the resolutions were vague as the Federation did not clarify its stand on Khalistan. The two resolutions are, however, inter-connected, though the first one is much more important as it signals a shift in stand. This signal coming as it does from the Manjit Singh group, should not be ignored. Mr. Manjit Singh is a brother of Bhai Amrik Singh, former president of AISSE, who was killed along with Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale during the Bluestar Operation. Mr. Harminder Singh Sandhu is its general secretary. It was reported recently by a section of the Press that the Centre was having secret parleys with these leaders to find a solution of the Punjab problem but they have denied these reports. Strangely, Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, who is being tried on the

charge of conspiracy to assassinate Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is also being consulted as disclosed by him recently to a news agency. The Governor, Mr. S.S. Ray, told the grievances redressal committee at Amritsar on May 22 that a radical change had been noticed in the thinking of many militants and it would not be long before they return to the national mainstream. This statement gave rise to speculation that the government was having secret talks with the Manjit group. According to these reports, the militants want declaration of general amnesty as a pre-condition for talks. A serious attempt is being made to reunite all the AISSE groups under the leadership of Mr. Manjit Singh but so far there is no indication of any success. An advertisement has appeared in a Punjabi daily on behalf of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann

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LETTERS



Punjab: The Litmus Test

The Government has been announcing that it is coming out with a package deal to solve the Punjab problem.

Before a solution is thought up, the problem must be identified with some precision. All of us know that law and order and a political deal relating to division of governmental power are two important points which had been the subject of discussion till Mrs Gandhi's assassination; perhaps the only two points.

River waters and land adjustment between the States are also relevant to the situation. While all this is important, he would be a bold man who can say that after the last terrorist has been accounted for and land and waters questions have been disposed of, it would be all peace in Punjab.

The reality of the situation as it has developed is that the Sikhs, by and large, have lost faith in the Government. (When I say Sikhs here, I mean the natives of Punjab and certainly not the Sikhs, say, of Delhi, who present saropas to men like Mr H.K.L. Bhagat for services rendered to the community.) As of today, the Punjab Sikhs are quick to suspect any Sikh of being a guisling who has any connection with the Government. If the Government wants the problem solved, it has to find ways to win back the trust of the Sikhs.

The Sikh bitterness and anger against the Centre is founded principally in two episodes: Operation Bluestar and the November '84 anti-Sikh riots. Sikhs as a whole and others who do not blindly accept the Government's case, think, and think with enough justification, that the raid on the Golden Temple was not unavo-

able but that it was undertaken to create an effect: to teach the Sikhs a lesson. It has now been revealed that the Army was hustled by the Government, it was not even given the time required to think out the strategy. That it was a case of indefensively gross over-kill has been demonstrated, if that was needed, by the subsequent Operation Black Thunder in which the loss of property or men was minimal, and the results spectacular.

But while the raid on the Temple hurt the Sikhs, events of November '84 affected them more directly and personally. These in a way set them apart: Sikhs on one side and the rest of the people on the other. On the roads, streets and lanes, and even in their houses, they were set upon and mercilessly butchered. It was not instinctive and sporadic, as it is given out by the Government. If that were so, it could be understood and condoned: the earth does tremble for a while when a big tree falls, as the Prime Minister has said. It is quite possible also that here and there, there might have been some spontaneous reaction against the foul deed of the two security men who shot down Mrs Gandhi in cold blood. But there is overwhelming evidence that mostly the killings were organised and intelligently directed operations. Public men of unimpeachable record and reputation have, in inquiry committees, reached conclusions that some ruling party men in high office and positions were behind the riots.

While there is anger that the crime of two men was avenged on the Sikhs in general, there is frustration that no action worth the name is being taken against the perpetrators of the carnage of about three thousand Sikhs in three days on the roads and streets of Delhi. True, some figures have lately been trotted out that action has been taken. The figures are misleading: 98 per cent of the action is for technical breaches of curfew orders. Only in one case of killing has conviction been so far obtained.

The litmus test of the Government's earnestness in wanting to solve the Punjab problem lies in its making an unequivocal public announcement which clearly directs the police to go ahead with the cases of the November riots,

with a public assurance that no ministerial or other influence would come in the way of their work. That even if the men involved are holding high offices, they too would be dealt with without fear.

If the Prime Minister has any certificates to give, he should give them in court just like any other defence witnesses. The courts can be trusted to sift the innocent from the guilty. Cleared by the courts they would stand vindicated whereas today they are under a cloud.

Holders of high office have equally high obligations. The solution of the Punjab problem is not beyond the reach of the Prime Minister if he sincerely desires it and is prepared to discard his present advisers. The Sikhs are a very earthy and matter-of-fact people and highly emotional at the same time. Quick to take offence but as quick to let bygones be bygones if convinced of the sincerity of the other side. Large-hearted and easy-going and when in one of their expansive moods, you can even take the shirt off their back. So generous.

Rightly or if you so like it, wrongly, they are feeling highly aggrieved. No matter why. It is now a case of "roothey hue yaaron ko manaane ka", of bringing round estranged friends. Their misfortune is that they have been guided by the wrong kind of leadership which, except in a few cases, is only power-hungry. These leaders can be left to stew in their own juice.

The Prime Minister has just to do two things. A green signal to his police to go ahead and open up the November '84 riot cases full throttle. For this he would have to make up his mind to surrender to justice a few of his partymen who happen to be close to him—just a few, not more than half-a-dozen. And he must make a public statement that he and his government are sincerely sorry for the mistake of Operation Bluestar. I have a gut feeling that the situation in Punjab would immediately start taking a turn for the better.

Surely that is not a high price to pay for peace which has been eluding us these many years.

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Sound And Fury

Politicians are also in public relations but have a lot to learn from professionals.

—Mr Jyoti Basu.

People are my gods.

—Mr N.T. Rama Rao.

This time we will not allow Rajiv to play the Hindu card.

—Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The present Government headed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi seems "videshi" to the people of this country.

—Nr V.P. Singh.

It is a social crime to put an individual on a pedestal.

—Mr Chandra Shekhar.

There are still some sensible people in the Janata Dal.

—Mr L.K. Advani.

After the end of July, they (the IPKF) have no business whatsoever in even an inch of land of my country.

—President Premadasa.

Are you thinking you can fight India and win? Do not provoke India.

—Mr Anura Bandaranaike, SLFP MMP, to President Premadasa.

Our eye is not only on those in the Opposition but also on those who are still in the Congress and who may be won over.

Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad.

We consider the National Front and BJP and all other reactionary forces as enemies of the Indian nation who have to be defeated.

—Mr Mohit Sen, general secretary of the United Communist Party of India.

The saffron and red flags (are) flying from the same mast.

—Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

We believe in the Constitution, but the Constitution does not believe in us.

Mr Simranjeet Singh Mann.

I have become a coin now which everybody wants to cash.

—Mr Sundarlal Bahuguna.

In China...one million people is still only a small number.

—Mr Deng Xiaoping.

As soon as the firing started, what was killed was the Communist Party. The Government died.

—Duoduo, the Chinese poet.

These events (in China) bear testimony to the resistance that builds up within such an authoritarian system.

—Mr Pik Botha, South African Foreign Minister.

Democracy from above is not democracy in a real sense.

Mr Fang Zizhi, the dissident Chinese astrophysicist.

We should not become the dustbin of Europe. These people in Hongkong are not British, they are Chinese.

—The Monday Club in Britain.

We cannot, no one in Iran can, on behalf of the Almighty, reverse the prescription of death sentence ordered by the late Iranian spiritual leader.

Mr Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Speaker of the Iranian Majlis.

NEWSHOUND



By Rap



- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality For Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

Blow To Federalism

The recent move of Congress in regard to the panchayati raj and local self bodies has come to acquire, without question, indisguised political overtones. A question which has not been answered by anyone so far is why has this move been initiated at this particular moment. There is no doubt that the intention behind the proposal is a good one. But why was the intention not brought into open for four long years? And indeed, why has it been brought into the open now?

This is a point of view put forward from many a platform. But much more is disconcerting the hostility of the Opposition states who suspect the bonafides of the Prime Minister. We share their misgivings. We also agree with them that raising this question at this particular juncture is an example of political opportunism. In plain words, whatever be the intention, the real purpose is to get political mileage out of this move.

There are two other dimensions, however, which have been noted but only in passing. Those are no less important and need to be dilated upon. Both of them relate to the kind of federalism that obtains in the country.

Once, when the mask is removed, it becomes clear that it is the states whose powers are being transferred to panchayats and district level bodies. That this requires to be done needs no arguing. That this should have been done decades ago is equally clear. What is more, it is the opposition parties which have performed better than the Congress-I ruled states. Nobody need quarrel therefore with transfer of power to the grassroots level. The transfer is called for and has been delayed, indeed overdelayed.

But the second aspect is no less disconcerting. Funding is going from the Centre to the local bodies directly. What precise statutory form this intention is given will become clear only after the bill has been presented to Parliament. The broad thrust however seems to be that it is not the states so much as the Centre which would be the patron of the local bodies. It is this fact which has created misgivings and this fact cannot be overlooked.

In terms of the existing arrangements, financial power is, by and large, concentrated in the hands of the Centre. In fact, the Centre has more funds than it can utilise. Hence the mechanism of the Finance Commission every five years. What the Sarkaria Commission has recommended is a partial answer to the problem. In essentials, the financial dominance of the Centre remains unqualified.

As long as the devolution of funds was from the Centre to the states, it was according agreed to an agreed pattern. Over four decades, the pattern has got stabilised. Though there was a good deal of criticism against it, there was at least a method about what was being done. What is more, that method was sanctified by the Constitution. Now, if the Constitution is amended to allow for a new mode of the devolution of funds from the Centre, it would be a further adverse step against the states and in favour of the Centre. Federalism which is already weighted in favour of the Centre and against the states would get further disturbed and create a severe dislocation in term of balance between the Centre and the States. The letter of the Tamilnadu Chief Minister to the Prime Minister in this behalf offered a cogent criticism of what is proposed to be done. It is difficult to improve upon the case made out by that State government. All that we wish to do is to point out in addition is that what is proposed to be done would be a severe blow to federalism.

The country is too vast and too diverse to be ruled from Delhi. Quite a few of the problems in Indian polity arise from this approach of over-centralisation. Must we add to these tensions and problems further? This is a question worth asking. In a sense, this is the most important aspect of the issue under consideration.

Over the decades, the polity has been under much pressure. So it became imperative to appoint a commission to go into the Centre-State relations. What this commission had to say did not resolve the problem. All that it did was to stall the crisis. How long it stays like that is difficult to say. But for anyone to believe that things have been pushed under the carpet and there would be no recurrence of tensions would not be a fair assessment.

This latest move by Rajiv Gandhi is thus a step in the direction of stabilizing the Indian polity rather than an attempt to bring balance and security to it.

Punjab Rewriting History Is No Solution

By S. Nihal Singh

With the elections approaching, Rajiv Gandhi and his government have adopted the Oscar Wildean adage that nothing succeeds like excess. But, as they are discovering for themselves, Wilde was not always right, invariably witty as he was, and the government has come a cropper.

Anyone who cares knows that one of the most shameful chapters of recent Indian history was the tragic assassination of Indira Gandhi and the carnage of Sikhs in Delhi following it. That this carnage was, at least in part, organised is equally well known. Accusing fingers have been pointed at Congress functionaries in Delhi on the strength of impressive evidence.

The government has done little, except to obfuscate and hide behind committees and court injunctions. It is no secret that any vigorous investigation and punishment of the guilty would have left large holes in the Delhi Congress set-up and some holes in the government. Morally reprehensible, yes; but those schooled in the realm of real-politik realised that it was perhaps politically dangerous for the Prime Minister to get at the guilty.

One would have imagined therefore that the Congress and the government would have left the tragic and shameful events of 1984 severely alone. But fired by the zeal to try to secure Sikh votes, the Congress went in where angels feared to tread. The first warning shot was fired a few months ago when Sajjan Kumar, a man named by victims in affidavits, resurfaced in public after more than four years—by public demand, as he suggested. Another name in the affidavits is of the information and broadcasting minister, H.K.L. Bhagat.

More recently, Rajiv Gandhi himself took up a theme that was to prelude to what was to follow. He spoke about the speed with which the riots were controlled, the unprecedented early rehabilitation of victims, the strict legal action taken against those accused of rioting. Senior Congress leaders against whom accusations had been made, he declared, could not have organised the riots because they had been with him from 48 to 72 hours helping in arrangements for Indira Gandhi's funeral.

The last assertion seems to have been made for the particular

benefit of Bhagat. Not one is to miss a trick, Bhagat went headlong to grasp the opportunity. The centrepiece of his efforts to win Sikhs and influence them was a siropa ceremony organised for him in Delhi. Siropa is offered by Sikhs to honour a person. A picture of a bareheaded Bhagat (everyone is enjoined to cover his head for such a ceremony) receiving a sword appeared in the Delhi papers.

If Rajiv Gandhi's patently false assertions were greeted with disbelief, the siropa presentation to Bhagat was taken by Sikhs as the ultimate insult. The five Sikh offenders were summoned to Amritsar by the head priests and given punishment, which was relatively mild. Unlike the penance awarded to the former chief minister, Surjit Singh Barnala, which had obvious intra-Akali political overtones, the punishment of the five was greeted with unanimous approval by the Sikhs.

The net result of this crusade by the Congress to wash away the sins of 1984 will be that few Sikhs will vote for the party. The wounds of 1984 have not entirely healed when this new attempt to rewrite recent history is being undertaken. Indeed, the more truth is stood on its head, the longer will be Sikh voters' queues against the Congress.

No one expects the Punjab problem to be resolved—rather, begin to be resolved—before the elections. When the Punjab Governor said so not long ago, he was belaboured on this point. Yet every political party is going into the Lok Sabha election on this premise. It is not merely a question of the government's actions—neither the Akali factions fighting a medieval battle among themselves nor the militants want to see peace restored just yet.

The spark of hope is provided by the ordinary peasant. There is enough evidence to suggest his revulsion against killings, even in a state where personal scores are often settled by the gun. The appeal of Khalistan has faded to a considerable extent, but the peasants are often squeezed between the terrorists demanding money and shelter and the police seeking to penalise those who have given shelter.

The Akalis are fighting among themselves to a state of near irrelevance. They might yet unite for a time, once they grasp the danger to their very political survival. There have been indications that some militant factions are toying with the idea of entering the politi-

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'Haleemi Raj' Will Not Come Through Bullets

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appealing to all Sikh organisations unite under one platform to raise their voice against "fake police encounters" and discrimination against Punjab and to force the government to accept their genuine demands so that peace could be restored in Punjab.

The allegations of fake police encounters and excesses on innocent Sikh youth have a direct bearing on the demand for setting up "haleemi raj". The concept of "haleemi raj" as mentioned in the Granth Sahib is different from the demand for Khalistan which involved the carving out of a separate 'Khitta' (territory) for the Sikhs. It is a concept of an ideal 'raj' where the common man lives a life of peace and comfort, where no one dominates over other and where everyone is assured of justice. The word 'haleemi' is derived from the Persian word 'Hilam' meaning softness. But in essence 'haleemi' means humility with all its accompanying attributes of tenderness, compassion and righteous ness. The ideal is Utopian but the human endeavour towards such a goal will never fade away. Glasnost and presetroika in Russia are moves towards making the State 'haleemi'. In China, the endeavour has received a serious setback but so long as the flame of hope burns in the human breast, the endeavour will continue.

The words 'haleemi raj' occur in the famous verses of Guru Arjun Dev, fifth Guru of the Sikhs, in the Granth Sahib. The verses are: "Hum Hukum Hua mehrban da, pai koi na kise rajhanwda, sab sukhali vuthia, ayo hua haleemi raj jeb." The Guru says that 'Haleemi raj' is such where everyone lives in peace and comfort and where there is no coercion of any kind and misuse of power.

Giani Gurdit Singh, a noted scholar of the Granth Sahib, says that though many philosophers in the past like Plato and Aristotle wrote about ideal 'raj' and the later developments in Europe led to the birth of the modern concept of democracy, even in these democracies power is exercised by the elite only. Even in Socialist countries power is exercised by the few only. What the Gurus envisaged was not a classless society so much as a society where there was least exercise of power and no domination of man over man. Guru Nanak, first Guru of the Sikhs took the initial steps towards establishing 'haleemi raj'. He travelled widely and wherever he went he established a 'sangat' a small organisation of good men and selected one of them as their leader to carry on the work of providing comfort to the people. Guru Amar Das, third Guru of the Sikhs, further strengthened the 'sangat' and organised 22 'manjis' or 'gad-

dies' for the spread of true religion.

Guru Arjun Dev, fifth Guru, introduced the system of *tithe*, which was not a tax but a voluntary contribution for the social and religious upliftment of the people through 'sangats'. The system continued during the time Guru Gobind Singh who established the Khalsa in 1699 and gave the Sikhs the distinct form and appearance which they enjoy today. The Guru lived through turbulent times and appointed 'panj piaars' (five beloveds). The Guru abolished the system of guruship and ordained that whenever the Sikhs could not congregate in a 'sangat', five respected and prominent Sikhs could take decisions on behalf of the community. He went a step further and abolished all distinction between the guru and the disciple. He first baptised the 'panj piaars' and then asked them to baptise him. "Wah Wah Gobind Singh, ape Gur Chela". To stretch the meaning in the modern context, he removed the distinction between the ruler and the ruled.

If it is 'haleemi raj' (where there is no oppressor and wielder of undue power) which the militants want, there is nothing wrong with such a demand. Did not Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru say on attaining independence that he wanted to wipe the tears from the face of every Indian? Did not his grandson and present Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, say about two years ago that he was against power brokers who had defiled the socio-political system in the country? Now Mr. Rajiv Gandhi wants to give power back to the people (Lok Shakti) by establishing panchayats and give them financial and other powers. There are shades of 'Sangat' in this scheme. The 'sangats' in the Sikh Gurus' times were the local panchayats, which depended on voluntary contributions for their finances and took decisions on behalf of the people. Let us not be peeved by nomenclature, but if by 'Khalsa panchayats' the militants mean the reestablishment of 'sangats' as envisaged by the Sikh Gurus, there is no harm in this demand also. The only thing is that those in power should talk to the militants to know what they really want as only a summary of the resolutions passed has been published even in the Punjabi newspapers.

Scholars of Sikh history and the Guru Granth Sahib, however, point out that the militants must equip themselves and make themselves worthy of 'haleemi raj'. One cannot have 'haleemi raj' if the people are generally corrupt and arrogant and that is why the Sikh Gurus' first emphasis was on religious and moral upliftment and purification. For them 'shakti' and 'bhakti' went together. Even Guru

Gobind Singh, who took to the sword as a last resort against injustice, tried to create soldiers (sant-sipahis). He was not

If the Governor is right in saying that there is a change in the thinking of some of the militants, his government should make earnest efforts to wean them away from the wrong path and bring them back to the national mainstream. This can be done only through talks.

against the Muslims but he was against Moghul injustices.

The two resolutions passed at the conference should not be dis-

missed off-hand. What is noteworthy is that there is no mention of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. How are the militants going to achieve 'haleemi raj'? Through 'goli' (bullet) or 'gal' (talks)? The people of Punjab today are fed up with terrorism and police excesses. What they want is 'sukhali zindagi' (peaceful living) as envisaged in the Granth Sahib.

The militants need to be reminded that what the Sikh gurus envisaged was the welfare of all and not of one community alone. Further, Guru Arjun Dev himself outlined the methodology of dealing with the government of the day. He says: "prithme mata je patri chalo, duttia mata due manukh ponhchao, tritia mata je karo". (meaning: first, settle matters through correspondence, secondly, send memorandums and if still there is no response only then (thirdly) consider what to do).

Are the militants following the teachings of the gurus? Have they corresponded with the government on their demands or sent memorandums? Do they wish the welfare of all or only of the Sikh community? "Nanak nam chardi kala, tere bhane sarbat ka bhala"

is a part of the daily prayer of the Sikhs. They need not be reminded that the Gurbani which they want to follow envisages the welfare of all. "Satgur sabna da bhala manayanda, tis da bura kuon hoi" is part of the hymns in the Granth Sahib. The militants criticise the police for its excesses and fake encounters but can extortions, kidnappings and molestation of women by criminals lead to 'haleemi raj'? Aren't killing of innocent persons a negation of the Gurus' teachings? Is not extortions a kind of coercion—the very antithesis of 'haleemi raj'? Democracy to be successful envisages majority of the people to be educated so that they can distinguish between right and wrong. 'Haleemi raj' goes a step further as it envisages the majority to be morally upright also.

If the Governor is right in saying that there is a change in the thinking of some of the militants, his government should make earnest efforts to wean them away from the wrong path and bring them back to the national mainstream. This can be done only through talks. The militants should also realise that 'haleemi raj' will not come through bullets.

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Chattisgarh Miners In Uncertainty

Workers Terrorised,

Attacked

By Bharat Dogra

Dalli Rajhara iron ore mines, located in Durg district of Madhya Pradesh, have often been in news. Frequently this has been due to the dedicated work done by a trade union, Chattisgarh Mines Shramik Sangh (CMSS) for the many-sided welfare of workers. In recent months this mining region has been in news due to the tensions prevailing here erupting from time to time in sporadic incidents of violence.

Dalli Rajhara mines meet the iron ore requirements of a giant and prestigious steel-plant in the public sector—the well-known Bhilai Steel Plant. This huge plant erected in a backward region was supposed to help in many-sided development of this region. The actual situation has been more complex and depressing. Apart from the people whom it directly displaced, the giant steel plant has also harmed the livelihood of a great many other villagers by cornering a very large share of the limited supplies of water. If the diversion of a large amount of water of B.S.P. needs had been accompanied by several small-scale irrigation schemes making best possible use of whatever water was available—implemented with the full involvement of ordinary peasants to secure maximum benefits for them—the situation could still have been saved to a certain extent but this work has been ignored or not carried out properly.

In the existing situation one main area of work which has enabled the local people, mainly tribals, to relate themselves to the steel plant in a positive way is the employment potential in the mines. Most of the miners employed in the manual and semi-mechanised mines of Dalli Rajhara are local people. A big majority of them are organised under the CMSS.

An important concern of the CMSS in the nearly 12 years of its existence has been to protect the jobs of miners and evolve such a technology (semi-mechanisation) which combines man and machine in a rational way to meet the ore needs of B.S.P. and also provides livelihood to a large number of people. The CMSS while being deeply concerned with the livelihood question of miners has not been blind to the quality and cost aspects of ore mining. Instead it

has been deeply concerned with these aspects as the union realises that in the long run any technology that cannot meet these requirements will be difficult to protect. The CMSS leadership is convinced that there is no contradiction in maintaining the employment potential of these mines and meeting the expanded needs of B.S.P. for good quality and cost-efficient ore. They cite several facts, figures and arguments to prove their point.

But then why is it that in the iron ore mines of our country the trend is steadily to move towards labour-displacing forms of mechanisation. In the captive mines of other steel plants, the mining work has been reduced to levels much below the Dalli Rajhara mining belt. Why is this so? The CMSS stand is that labour-displacing forms of mechanisation in iron-ore mines is being introduced not because it is essential for cost efficient production of good quality steel, but because it serves the economic interests of the sellers of these labour displacing machines and their technology, as whether these sellers are based in India or abroad, (or subcontractors who may install the machines and undertake other subsidiary works) and the officials who are in collusion with these economic interests.

The stand of the CMSS is that such mechanisation should be resisted as much as possible, but if this is not possible due to the overall trends in economy and industry, then efforts have to be made to defend the jobs of workers despite the introduction of such labour-displacing mechanisation.

CMSS has pointed in a recent pamphlet that in recent years in Chattisgarh region over 15000 jobs have been lost in the mining sector due to the related policies of mechanisation and retrenchment. These include the retrenchments at the mines of Bailadilla, Nandini, Hirri, Ari Dongri, Rajhara and Baradwara. CMSS is determined not to allow this drift towards unemployment to be carried further.

However, this is precisely what the management is trying to do by introducing a new stage of mechanisation.

In its long-term efforts to ensure job security to workers, the CMSS has tried hard to obtain departmentalisation for them. The law, which says that jobs which are of a permanent and perennial nature should be departmentalised, is on its side. Negotiations for depart-

mentalisation have taken place from time to time during the last decade. A relatively smaller number of workers have in fact been departmentalised, but this has been denied to the large majority of workers.

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written." The Chief Labour Commissioner has been seized of the problem. In August 1980 he had asked the Bhilai Steel Plant Management to review the working of this system (of semi-mechanisation). This review was carried out and it was found that it would not be technically feasible to operate the mines in a semi-mechanised manner as large production was involved, and this situation was likely to endanger the life of the mines and the workmen. From an economic point of view also, it was established that it would be advantageous to work through mechanised process for which large investments have been made since this would reduce costs of production a great extent. The management has already departmentalised the maximum number of workers based on their requirements established after a study. There is no scope of further departmentalisation".

Given these facts, it is not difficult to understand why the CMSS is opposing mechanisation and insisting on departmentalisation, proper recording of age, gratuity payment etc. before mechanisation if the latter cannot be avoided, instead of putting all its trust in vague assurances of the management.

When the CMSS tried to offer opposition to the implementation of a contract worth crores of rupees for preliminary mechanisation work, vested interests made available a lot of money and job offers to a rival union having little support base among miners except in a few pockets. The leaders of this union then brought in several youths from villages with promises of jobs and other benefits. They were used to attack CMSS members and terrorise them. The eagerness of CMSS to maintain peace was misused by these gangsters who attacked several CMSS members and even forced over a hundred families to flee from their homes. These incidents of violence made the situation very tense and insecure. In the prevailing situation of job insecurity, CMSS members stopped going to work in the first week of May. CMSS leaders have expressed the fear that attempts to provoke their members are being constantly made so that violent clashes increase and in this disturbed atmosphere, anti-worker repression can be unleashed and their strength to oppose mechanisation and other undesirable changes can be curbed.

As Shankar Guha Niyogi, Organising Secretary of CMSS, has written in a recent communication dated January 12 to the D.G.M. (Mines), B.S.P., "At the time of earlier mechanisation management assured and committed to departmentalise the workers of Dalli Rajhara group of mines, which was ultimately not done. On the contrary the workers had to face the attitude of arrogant disdain from the officers of B.S.P."

In a strike notice dated December 12 CMSS has said, "A Number of settlements have been violated and it is now crystal clear that the management neither honours the law of the land nor fulfills the social responsibility towards the region and violates its own commitment made in the form of settlement."

It appears that a policy decision had been taken quite some time back to mechanise the mines and at the same time refuse to departmentalise the miners. In a letter dated June 22, 1984 addressed to Shri A.K. Roy, former Member of Parliament, who took a keen interest in the problem of miners, Mr. N.K.P. Salve, who was then Union Minister of Steel and Mines, had

Continued on page 6

Rewriting History Is No Solution

Continued from page 3

ical framework although it is too early to say whether they have a secret agenda in wanting to do so, in addition to trying to capture political power.

The two communist parties are bravely fighting the terrorists, at considerable cost to their cadres. Their recipe is that the government should resist the temptation of making clever deals with the terrorists, but should strengthen the people's resolve by undertaking solid and consistent political ground work. They rightly believe that the Punjab problem is a national one and all political parties should work for achieving the

competition for the Hindu votes between the Congress and such parties as the Bhartiya Janata Party. In practice, there will be fragmentation of votes among the Akalis, the Congress, the BJP and communists.

Given this scenario, it is somewhat baffling why Rajiv Gandhi and his party are making the kind of efforts they are in wooing the Sikh vote. Instead of assuaging Sikh feelings, they are merely rubbing salt in the wounds. There are no instant solutions for Punjab, but the Congress cannot hope to win the hearts and minds of Sikhs through an excess of propaganda. Frequent television shots of Rajiv

In electoral terms, Punjab's is not a particularly hospitable climate for the Congress. While the bulk of the Sikhs is unlikely to vote for the Congress, there will be a competition for the Hindu votes between the Congress and such parties as the BJP.

objectives of securing peace forsaking partisan profit.

The police and paramilitary forces are doing a difficult job and have, over the years, acquired more expertise in dealing with the problems involved. Some disturbing reports of police high-handedness and worse must be thoroughly investigated and the errant men and officers punished. But the police and paramilitary forces also need sympathy for the lives they have sacrificed.

In electoral terms, Punjab's is not a particularly hospitable climate for the Congress. While the bulk of the Sikhs is unlikely to vote for the Congress, there will be a

Gandhi addressing groups of Sikhs on the lawns of his residence do not carry conviction.

If the effort is aimed not so much at Sikhs but rather at refurbishing the Congress's secular image, it will not enhance the party's appeal. The dead cannot be brought back and if the guilty cannot be punished, it would be more beneficial for the Congress to pass over this sorry chapter in silence. The answer is not to rewrite history in this age of glasnost when even the communist world is beginning to wake up to the national distortions that inevitably arise in painting the black white.

Workers Terrorised, Attacked

Continued from page 5

CMSS has emerged in recent years as a symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the oppressed people of Chattisgarh. The least that can be expected of an enlightened public sector management is that it should not plan to the ero-

sion and gradual destruction of such an organisation. B.S.P. management should approach the CMSS with an open mind to their suggestions of making available quality ore as per BSP needs. Management should help and

encourage them in this effort instead of trying to hinder its success. And if this happens, then even at this late stage B.S.P. can be identified with the hopes and aspirations of Chattisgarh instead of being regarded as an alienated and oppressive force.

AN APPEAL

HELP THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF NOVEMBER 1984 WIDOWS

The Sikh Forum is providing financial assistance for education of orphan children of the violence since early 1984. Since January 1988, this has been transferred to a Trust named "Citizens' Relief Rehabilitation & Education Fund". This trust is duly registered and have obtained IT exemption under section 80G of IT Act 1961 at present valid till 30 Nov 1990.

The sponsoring member/family/ organisation who wish to sponsor one or more children will be provided with full particulars of the child i.e., name, age, sex, present address, grade, school and photograph of the child. Minimum monthly stipend required for educating a child is Rs. 75/- or Rs. 900/(\$75) annually. The number of children who need this assistance is approximately 1200. We have been able to arrange donors for 910 children as well as for those who may withdraw at the end of the year.

We are approaching you with an appeal to enrol yourself as a donor to sponsor as many children's education as you can for five years, if possible.

The draft/cheque should be made in favour of "Citizen Rehabilitation & Education Fund" and sent to 3, Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014.

Elections In Punjab

Continued from page 1

Petty Politics

In fact the question of religion and politics all these years has been overplayed both by the Akalis and the Congress. Reality is that the Akalis have used religion for politics no more or less than other parties including the Congress. The difference is that in the content of proclaimed *miri* and *piri* concept Akalis do it overtly particularly in the one-up-manship game in factionalism while other parties

do it covertly to project their secular image to win the widest possible support.

It seems that Mr. Buta Singh is providing the Akalis for a confrontationist attitude and not to go for registration and thereby leaving the ground free for his party. In this he is not concerned how much people will get alienated. On the other hand Akali record so far also suggests that they are prone to this type of provocation and adopt confrontationist line just for nothing without realising its long term consequences for themselves and the

state and the community they claim to represent.

Suffers in this game of petty party politics are people and the national interests. But who is bothered for them? If the government is really concerned then the need of the hour is to initiate the process for political solution to Punjab crisis. The first step in that direction is establishment of a popular government. Let the people of Punjab speak for themselves who represents their interests; let it be any party or any faction so far it is within the framework of Indian Constitution.

JODHPUR DETENUES

"We Were Even Denied Fresh Air"

"On 3 June 1984, after paying our obeisance at Shri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, I along with other people were going round *parkarma* (passage round the Golden Temple). That day Jathedar Nadhatar Singh with his men was to court arrest, and a huge crowd had gathered to witness it. But unfortunately at about 4 O'clock along with other pilgrims, I was also arrested by the army men."

Twenty-five year old Karaj Singh, s/o Sardar Lakha Singh, told this correspondent that when he was arrested, there were about 200 other men were also with him, including old and young men. And they were taken to a military camp

"We were kept in a room where weapons used to be stored. It had no ventilation, so did light, and we felt suffocated, and we were not provided with even food or water. Our arms were kept so

men ruthlessly started firing on them and it left about 60-70 dead. From 7 June to 28 August, we remained there in vests and underwears. We had no other cloths to cover our bodies. After keeping us in the army camp and

health ethics and were only for name's sake. They gave us only 10 to 13 litres of water for all daily purposes—drinking, bathing and washing clothes."

Karaj Singh told that he was in the jail for a period of four years,

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED

"in the central jail in Amritsar for a long time, we were then taken to the central jail of Jodhpur," he said.

Karaj Singh explained that during this period the detainees were treated with a vengeance. He said, "about the food given to us, it hardly justified medical and

three months and 14 days. During that period fabricated charges were laid and he had to appear before authorities 62 times. The government could not produce any evidence to prove any of these crimes or charges.

Explaining his astounding

experience in the dungeons of Jodhpur, Karaj Singh lamented, "very powerful alarms were sounded during the night hours where we were lodged to deny us even sleep. In the entire period of detention, I never met any of my relations." While he was explaining all this, the sign of fear on his face, caused by terror unleashed by the jail authorities, was apparently visible.

He said that at the time of release, they were not served with any certificate of detention. When asked about his future plan, he was not sure, "I cannot make up my mind. Perhaps, I am not yet aware of the fact that I am finally released".

Kottayam, the headquarters of a district in Kerala, has made history by becoming the first town in the entire country to achieve cent per cent literacy. The town has in fact stolen a march over Ernakulam district in Kerala where an intensive drive under the banner Nehru Saksharatha Jyoti is underway to eradicate illiteracy from the entire district and to achieve total literacy during the Nehru Centenary year. It was not surprising, though. The 1981 Census had already put Kottayam in the lead with 82 per cent literacy in a State which still holds the record in the country with the highest literacy rate of 70 per cent, as per 1981 figures. The figure should definitely be higher now and the possibility of Kerala achieving near-total literacy by the time of the next census is very much there.

According to the People's Education and Literacy Campaign, Kottayam, PELCK to be short, the entire population of the town numbering 68,000 is now literate. The intensive campaign that was launched on March 4, 1989 under the auspices of the National Service Scheme of the Mahatma Gandhi University took only 100 days to achieve the incredible feat. In fact the PELCK was a sequel to the literacy survey conducted by N.S.S. volunteers in the town in January 1989. Their survey of 12,000 households revealed that there were 2208 illiterates in the 5-65 age group. The students body decided to teach all of them in just 100 days. And the campaign was launched on March 4, 1989.

Kottayam Municipal town has 32 wards. 32 National Service Volunteers were deployed as coordinators in all the 32 wards. The coordinators organised ward committees to chalk out programmes of action for the literacy drive. These ward committees converted themselves into task groups which went round the wards to identify the illiterates and to impart lessons in functional literacy. There were 700 volunteers in all who took up this challenge with missionary zeal. Members of youth organisations, retired teachers, social workers and ex-servicemen came forward to assist the student volunteers.

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Kottayam Heralds the Literacy Revolution

Overcoming Hurdles

The task proved to be no cake-walk for the volunteers. It came out that the majority of the illiterates belonged to the 45-65 age group. The learning process in old age is bound to be slow. And this slow pace proved to be quite

A People's Movement

The campaign caught the fancy of the citizens in no time. The spirit and enthusiasm proved to be not only irresistible but really contagious. People from all walks of life came forward to participate in the campaign. Even officials did

not hesitate to jump into the fray.

Cultural programmes, street plays and folk dances on theme were staged in almost all the wards of the town. City schools and homes reverberated with folk songs on functional literacy. Volunteers of the popular Kerala

The literacy campaign caught fancy of the people in no time. The spirit and enthusiasm proved to be not only irresistible but really contagious. People from all walks of life came forward to participate in the campaign. Even officials did not hesitate to jump into the fray.

The district collector too came forward to teach the illiterates. And those who were standing and watching decided to organise literacy processions to drive home the message in every nook and corner of the town. To crown it all, a literacy flag was hoisted when hundreds took the literacy pledge.

exasperating to the young blood who tried to teach them. Poverty was another impediment. To persuade them to find a little time to learn, after the day's hard work was by no means easy. But the youngsters rose up to the occasion and persisted and persevered. And they did succeed in the case of all the 2208 persons including 1300 women. 1400 of the illiterates were slum dwellers for whom literacy classes were opened in slums.

Opening the Eyes

Then there was the physical obstacle of lack of vision among the aged. This formidable difficulty was overcome by literally opening their eyes through free eye camps and treatment which the students organised with the help of medical personnel.

There were quite a few bilingual and multilingual workers among the illiterates which posed yet another problem. The largest group among them was of Tamilians numbering 20. National Service volunteers from Nagercoil in Kanyakumari district of Tamilnadu came to the rescue to teach Tamil to Tamilian illiterates.

not hesitate to jump into the fray. The district collector too came forward to teach the illiterates. And those who were standing and watching decided to organise literacy processions to drive home the message in every nook and corner of the town. To crown it all, a literacy flag was hoisted when hundreds took the literacy pledge.

Sastram Sahitya Parishad took out an Akshara Kala Jatha for popularising the campaign. A poster competition on the literacy theme added colour to the whole campaign that had become a People's Movement involving the entire citizenry.

Role of the Illiterates

The stars of this show indeed were the hitherto illiterates—the real performers who took up the challenge to come out of the darkness of ignorance. Among them is the fifty year old Ragavan whose legs had been amputated and who had to travel by boat to attend his classes. He used to spend Rs. 60 out of his monthly pension of Rs. 75 for the purpose. And then he had to literally crawl 5 kms from the boat jetty to the venue of the class. Then there is Kochu Kochu who persisted in his 'boycott' of the literacy movement claiming to have more worldly wisdom than the most wise. But he had to give way and join the hand of his newly literate brethren when he was accosted by the feeling of being left out of the mainstream.

Follow Up

Many a good movement meets with premature death when the first wave of enthusiasm dies down. The people of Kottayam are aware of it and they have already planned the second phase of the campaign which consists of organised moves to motivate the newly literates in utilising their newly acquired knowledge continuously and in a sustained manner. The Department of Education of the Government of India has already sanctioned Rs. 1.67 lakhs for a 15 month post-literacy follow up programme.



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E.K.SWAMY/HPS/11/81

In Bombay North-West constituency, a bye-election saw a triangular contest in December 1987 between the Congress-I, the Shiv Sena and the Janata Party. However, the main contest was between the Congress-I and the Shiv Sena candidates. However, Prabhakar Kunte, the Congress-I candidate, was quite strong and has the reputation of holding secular views. When the election result was declared Mr. Kunte lost to the Shiv Sena candidate by a margin of more than 10,000 votes. The Sena candidate secured 29,547 votes whereas the Congress candidate secured only 18,783 votes.

Mr. Prabhakar Kunte, the Congress candidate alleged that the Sena not only indulged in virulently communal propaganda but also prevented large number of people from voting through intimidatory tactics. Mr. Kunte, therefore, filed a petition in the Bombay High Court to set aside the election under section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, on grounds of corrupt practices and making appeal to the electorate in the name of religion. The Bombay High Court heard the arguments and finally delivered the judgement in favour of the Congress candidate setting aside the election of the Shiv Sena candidate. It was a historic judgment.

Ours is a secular democracy and theoretically and constitutionally no appeal can be made to the electorate on the basis of one's caste, creed, religion or sex. However, strong religious prejudices developed on account of division of our country seemingly on the basis of religion and our electoral processes, despite constitutional provisions to the contrary, could never become truly secular. In rural areas appeal used to be made to the voters on the basis of caste and in urban areas on the basis of religion. However, and this is important to note, at the time of promulgation of the constitution, feudal loyalties were still very strong and votes were exercised more on personal loyalties than on religious or ideological considerations.

However, the feudal structure of our society was considerably weakened by mid-sixties when the green revolution began to succeed and personal loyalties in the feudal sense lost their relevance. However, the developmental process was highly uneven not only regionally but also caste and community wise as well. This lead to more and more caste and communal violence since sixties. The major communal violence even in early sixties in Jabalpur, Rourkela, Jamshedpur, etc. The communal prejudices were thus greatly strengthened.

What was worse, the ruling party often manipulated with great success the religious sentiments to come to power. The minorities, from the beginning depended on the Congress for their security and well-being though such a dependence was more perceptual than realistic. Nehru, though he could not prevent communal violence,

Bombay High Court Judgement

Shiv Sena For Se

theoretically at least stood for security of minorities and often gave expression to his feelings. The Hindu parties like the Jan Sangh never approved of this and denounced it as a policy of appeasing Muslims. Until today BJP (i.e. former Jana Sangh) has maintained this stance and has consistently attacked the ruling Congress for its appeasement of minorities.

One should bear in mind that minorities, not only in India but throughout the world tend to vote on block more for reasons of its security than other issues. The behaviour of Indian Muslims or other minorities is by no means exceptional. However, since early eighties the ruling Congress shifted its political proclivity in favour of majority community and left Indian Muslims wondering as to how to fill this gap. The whole political scene is still pretty confused. But it must be said that this shift of the ruling Congress in favour of majority community far more communalised the political processes in this country.

It also resulted in keener competition between communal parties to use communal appeal with far greater virulence so as to outdo each other. The Shiv Sena, a former regional party, began to play the same game specially to stage a comeback since early eighties and has been trying to outdo all other communal parties in using Hindu communalism in its most militant form. In the midst of plethora of communal parties it saw no other but to vend its communal ware and it did with certain amount of success. The Aurangabad civic elections of 1988 should also be seen in the same light where the Shiv Sena registered initial success.

The Vile Parle bye-election of December 1987 were also fought, by Shiv Sena on communal card. The main slogan in the election was "say with pride we are Hindus". This slogan was also advertised in some of the leading English and language dailies of Bombay with a by-line that vote for Shiv Sena candidate. It is unfortunate that these dailies chose to carry this advertisement on the front page. Also, the election campaign was mainly conducted by Sena chief Mr. Bal Thackaray and that too, needless to say, on the grounds of militant Hinduism. This, coupled with intimidatory tactics, as pointed out above, ensured the Sena victory. It was, therefore, quite natural that the aggrieved Congress-I candidate Mr. Prabhakar Kunte, filed an election petition in Bombay High Court.

The petition has been filed under section 123(3) of the Rep-

resentation of People Act. This section prohibits promoting of and attempting to promote feelings of enmity and hatred between different classes of the citizens of India on the ground of religion and community, which is proscribed by section 123 (3A), and the section 123 (2) prohibits intimidation of voters by the use of undue influence. After hearing of arguments and evidence in the election petition had been recorded before Justice Bharucha, a notice under Section 99 of the said Act was issued to Mr. Balasaheb Thackaray, the leader of the Shiv Sena and Mr. Thackaray appeared in the court in pursuance thereof.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Thackaray had publicly stated that he did not believe in democracy but in democracy like that of Shivaji Maharaj. And the Shiv Sena candidate Dr. Ramesh Prabhu also subscribed to this view. Interestingly enough Mr. Bal Thackaray again reiterated this view on 24th May in Bombay in a Rotary club meeting in midtown. He is reported to have said that elections are a major ailment affecting the country and Mr. Thackaray declared total support to the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, if he decided to do away with the elections in the interest of the development of the country. (see *The Times of India*, Bombay of May 25, 1985 under the caption I'll use religion for votes).

Justice Bharucha remarks in his judgement that "The plank upon which Shiv Sena was going to contest the election had been decided upon by Mr. Thackaray and others in advance of the 1st respondent (Dr. Ramesh Prabhu's) election campaign. The first respondent was not among those who had taken the decision. He was told about it subsequently. Further Justice Bharucha says, There was no practice of recording decisions taken by Mr. Thackaray and other leaders of the Shiv Sena The election plank was this; "we were against the Janata Party because it was anti-nationalist; we were against Mr. Sahabuddin who had called for black flags for Republic Day; we were against Mr. Nihal Ahmed who had kicked at decorations to a Ganesh; we were against Muslims who celebrated India's defeat at cricket matches and who hoisted Pakistani flags at cricket matches."

Mr. Bal Thackaray considered the Janata Party anti-nationalist just because Mr. Sahabuddin and Nihal Ahmed are its members and they are Muslims. Muslims are anti-national because they rejoice when India loses a cricket match. Mr. Bal Thackaray is not prepared to think as to why some Muslims

The Sena supremo, Bal Thackaray, also made it clear that he is not seeking Muslim votes. He also said in one of the meetings that if Muslims were present among the audience, they better not vote for the Sena. Does this not amount to talking in favour of separate electorate?

Did we not fight against the concept of separate electorate all through our freedom struggle?

All these utterances leave readers in no doubt that the Sena believes in two-nation theory, something against which we fought for long years and which was responsible for division of our country on the basis of religion.

(though certainly not all) celebrate when India loses a cricket match? Are there some serious reasons for such feelings or is it by virtue of their religion. The way Mr. Thackaray projects the issue, it appears as if it is by virtue of their religion. If it is so one would like to ask why deeply religious persons like Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani and Maulana Azad so very deeply nationalists? Why their religion did not come in their way in becoming such staunch nationalists? And how is it that modernists like Jinnah and Liyaqat Ali became champions of Muslim separation? It is not political rather than religious fight?

There was one more reason for Mr. Bal Thackaray dubbing the Janata Party as anti-national: Mr. Chandrashekhar, the then president of the Janata Party had stated that no harm would be done if Ram Janambhoomi was handed over to the Muslims. Justice Bharucha observed on the basis of evidence recorded that in the Vile Parle bye-election the election campaign focussed on the two issues, one related to the Ram Janambhoomi and Ram Janambhoomi in Ayodhya. The other related to the publication by the State Government of "Guidelines of Hinduism". From this it is clear that communalists are not interested in people's life like poverty, unemployment, etc. They are only bothered about abstract religious controversies.

Bal Thackaray also maintains that the Congress was guilty of misrule for last 40 years and the example of this misrule was the protection and privileges the minorities enjoy and that these privileges are not available to the majority community. We have already hinted at this in the beginning of this article. One is tempted to ask Bal Thackaray what are the privileges enjoyed by the minorities, specially the Muslims? Are these privileges economic or political? If economic, the Muslims in this country should have been big businessmen, industrialists and monopolists. Or atleast, they should be holding managerial and technocrats posts in large numbers in this country. The reality is just the opposite. They are poor & illiterate. They have no business, let alone industries in their hands. They neither hold higher posts in Government nor in private sector. Their position is worse. Our Institute's survey for private sector in Bombay indicates they are highly under-represented. Yes Muslims are 'privileged' to be in crime. As all other avenues are blocked

On Shiv Sena Election Campaign

Separate Electorate

By Engineer

hey take to crime. No one would envy them for this privilege. Bal Thackaray also maintained his statements in the court of law that Muslims enjoy protection in this country which Hindus don't. The facts speak quite eloquently in this respect. How they et killed number of riots all over India is an eloquent testimony to their unenviable protection they enjoy. In May 1987, more than 40 young Muslim boys from Hashimara in Meerut were shot near a station in Moradnagar and thrown into the jaws of the PAC judicial inquiry was held till today. In this the protection Bal Thackaray hints at? His own Shiv Sainiks went on rampage in Mumbai-Bhilwadi belt in May 84 and killed several Muslims. Is anyone brought to the book? This is the protection the ruling Congress providing them for which Mr Thackaray has groused against it.

Mr. Bal Thackaray also said, in statement before the judge that provisions of law should be equally applicable to the people of all religions. It is clear that Mr. Thackaray is hinting at separate personal laws for different religious communities, specially for Muslims who can take more than one wife. The point is that this matter is always looked from men's and not women's angle. Ultimately in this dominated society, whether Hinduism or Islam it is women who have to suffer. Polygamy may be a privilege to men but it is a curse for women. What is needed is change in the law, not envy for the privileges in this or that community. If we want to build a just and humane society, we will have to attempt an honest critique of those socio-cultural or socio-religious traditions which perpetuate injustice or cause exploitation in one section at the hand of another section.

One of the election speeches by Thackaray likened the Muslim Shias to cobras. He said in his speech "they (referring to Congress Party) might have been in Nagaland but nothing could be achieved in Vile Parle by referring to the Cobra like form ('naghe roop') of the Muslims and Hindus.....In his recent Rotary speech on 24th May referred above he called Muslims green ants. This is ultra aggressive communalism and such aggressive postures can seriously threaten the unity & integrity of the country. It is highly surprising that authorities do not take any steps against such objectionable behaviour.

Ours is a secular democracy and theoretically and constitutionally no appeal can be made to the electorate on the basis of one's caste, creed, religion or sex. However, strong religious prejudices developed on account of division of our country seemingly on the basis of religion and our electoral processes, despite constitutional provisions to the contrary, could never become truly secular. In the rural areas appeal used to be made to the voters on the basis of caste and in urban areas on the basis of religion. However, and this is important to note, at the time of promulgation of the constitution, feudal loyalties were still very strong and votes were exercised more on personal loyalties than on religious or ideological considerations.

Bal Thackaray also said in his speech inaugurating the Vile Parle election campaign to which Justice Bharucha refers in his judgement, said, "The population of Muslims was 2½ crores at the time of Independence but had now crossed 14 crores. "We" (meaning the Hindus) were practicing family planning but "they" (meaning the Muslims) kept on producing children. Those children were being ungrateful."

Besides being cheap demagogic which is what his speeches generally amount to, it is pretty dangerous stuff. Firstly, his population figures are entirely wrong. The Muslim population at the time of partition was around 4 crores and not two-and-a-half crores as he makes it out to be. Secondly, according to 1981 census the Muslim population is around 8 crores and not 14 crores. Bal Thackaray is exaggerating Muslim population in order to frighten the Hindus. It is interesting to note that both Hindu and Muslim communalists exaggerate figures of Muslim population in India for their own reasons. Muslim communalists feel that the Government is underplaying their population to reduce their political weight and the Hindu communalists say that Government hides true figures of Muslim population as it is embarrassing to reveal the true figures to the Hindus.

In fact there is no truth in these exaggerated figures. What is the source of their information. Have they held any independent census? They are spreading this falsehood for their political ends. In fact the blanket statement that Muslims do not practice family planning cannot be true. Family planning is a socio-economic category which is sought to be converted into religious category by communalists. Practice or non-practice of family planning is directly independent on one's economic and not religious status. It is amply borne out by empirical studies. Muslims of comparable economic educational status display the same behaviour in respect of family planning as their counterparts in the Hindu community. Yet the propaganda that Muslims do not practice family planning goes on full blast and through it is sought to be impressed that Muslim population soon will overtake Hindu population in the country and it would then be a Muslim raj in the land of Hindus.

Another political implication of this deliberate propaganda is that the secular government in this country pampers the minority and hence cannot discipline them into practicing family planning and therefore it is necessary to vote

militant Hindu party like Shiv Sena to power. Thus in the same speech referred to above Mr. Thackaray says, "The entire country had been ruined by misrule, which was why the Shiv Sena stood on the Hinduism and on that stand it was going to step into the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Thackaray also incited his Hindu audience to take up arms to defend themselves as the Government is not going to defend them. He said, "Mind well we shall be compelled to take up arms. We must tell the Government that their laws and their police are unable to protect our lives. We shall be compelled to protect our lives ourselves and we shall do so." Mr. Justice Bharucha then observes, "If the power of the State was in Mr. Thackaray's hands he would not programme. They will have to conduct themselves according to the law of the land.....I appeal to you to elect the Shiv Sena, which is standing on the ground of Hinduism, by large margin of votes." The Sena, which is standing on the ground of Hinduism, by large margin of votes." The Sena also raised the slogan in its election meetings, along with other slogans, "The protection of Hinduism is protection of the country."

The Sena supremo also made it clear that he is not seeking Muslim votes. He also said in one of the meetings that if Muslims were present among the audience they better not vote for the Sena. Does this not amount to talking in favour of separate electorate? Did we not fight against the concept of separate electorate all through our freedom struggle? Are we going to advocate it even today? Do we want polarisation on communal lines once again? Are we going to advocate view given by the Shiv Sena candidate Dr. Ramesh Prabhu, the first respondent to Janambhoomi Pravasi makes a painful reading. Justice Bharucha has referred to this interview in his judgement. Dr. Prabhu said in his interview that all nationalists in India were Hindus and those who were against national interests were Muslims and the fight in the election was between Hinduism and Islam. He also said that there was Hindu wave in Vile Parle. If he was defeated, it would be a defeat for Hinduism. All these utterances leave readers in no doubt that the Sena believes in two nation theory, something against which we fought for long years and which was responsible for division of our country on the basis of religion.

Mr. Thackaray also said in his speeches that Shankar Rao Chavan had recommended the Union Railway Ministry that the names of railway stations should be written in Urdu on the name

plates at railway stations in Bombay. He also said that 30 Muslims had been promoted directly in the police force and that this was against "our" interests and, therefore, the Shiv Sena would oppose the Government's policy in this regard.

This clearly shows that according to Mr. Thackaray neither Urdu language should be used anywhere nor Muslim officers should get promotion. There is division of the country into "we" and "they", Hindus and Muslims. What is in the interest of the Hindus is in national interest and what is in the interest of Muslims is anti-national. Can there be more blatant attack on the concept of secularism than this and yet such speeches were made repeatedly by the Sena chief during the election campaign during November-December 1987.

However, it was, no doubt, strength of our constitution that this election was not set aside. Justice Bharucha heard all the arguments and came to the conclusion that such high pitch communal campaigning amounts to corrupt practice under section 123(3) of the Representation of People Act. Thus the learned judge held that "Upon the notice under section 99 issued to Mr. Thackaray, it is held that he is guilty of the corrupt practice prescribed by the sub-sections of the first respondent (i.e. Dr. Ramesh Prabhu of Shiva Sena) he did not agree with the prayer to seat Mr. Prabhakar Kunte.

The Bombay High Court judgement in this election petition must be hailed as a landmark judgement and one which, enlivens our faith in the constitutional processes. Our country is passing through, not only socio-economic but also political crisis of severe nature. Communal and fundamentalist forces are raising their ugly head. They are out to tear the very secular fabric of our country to pieces. There is every danger of judiciary also getting communalised and to some extent it has happened at the lower echelons. It is in this backdrop that one must see the Bombay High Court judgement and must welcome it. We should not allow our electoral processes to be communalised. We will have to do everything possible to check this nasty trend. The judgement also draws our attention to the fact that there was a serious attempt on the part of the Shiv Sena to intimidate voters. It is also a sad commentary and to which the judgement draws our attention that the petitioner and the advocate general did not present the evidence of the senior police officers though it was vital to the process of exercise of votes. To a reader it appears that the role of the police was not totally impartial. It did not help genuine voters to exercise their franchise. Cross-examination of the senior police officers would have revealed much.

It seems politicians are out to manipulate our religious sentiments but we can, at least of now, can continue to repose our faith in the higher echelons of judiciary.

SIKHISM

Guru Harkrishan

The eighth Nanak, Guru Harkrishan, was born at Kiratpur in 1566. His birthday is to be celebrated on 26th July this year. Among Delhi's historical shrines, two are in his memory-Gurudwara Bangla Sahib and Gurudwara Bala Sahib, the former being the most important of all the shrines today. In the first half of the 17th century it used to be the residence of Raja Jai Singh and it was here that Guru ji stayed throughout his sojourn at Delhi. Nowadays Gurudwara Bangla Sahib attracts the greatest number of pilgrims from various towns, not only Sikhs but others even from abroad also.

Guru's elder brother, Ram Rai had been sent to Delhi by his father, Guru Har Rai the 7th Nanak. He impressed Aurangzeb by his miracles but he forgot his father's brief not to indulge in this. His object sycophancy made him recite one line of Guru Nanak's song by altering one word to please the king—"Mitti Muslman Ki" to "Mitti Bai man Ki" and so had annoyed his father so much that he bestowed Guruship on the younger brother, Hari Krishan, instead of Ram Rai. Hari Krishan was child of five at that time and he became the 8th Nanak. In Sikhism age factor was no value but merit. It is purely divine choice or divine grace which finally decides the issue. The 3rd Nanak was above seventy when he was bestowed with Guruship by 2nd Nanak in 1552 more than hundred years earlier. Thus Ram Rai had forfeited his claim.

In one of the poems of Guru Gobind Singh, which is the opening para in the Sikh Prayer, this is stated about Guru Harkrishan—"His sight dispels all sufferings"—"Jis di the Sab dukh Jaiye"—people of deep faith and belief visiting the Gurudwara all these years have borne testimony to the truth of the statement and cases of cure have come to light even nowadays. When Guruji was staying here, the city of Delhi was struck with an epidemic of Cholera. Many people were cured by the water in the shrine. Guru himself had an attack of the disease and when someone asked him why or how about it—the child guru replied—whosoever has taken this mortal frame must go through sickness and disease—what is ordained by the Almighty must happen. In Guru Granth Sahib there is a beautiful saying P 149—"Sukh dukh doi dar Kapre Pahrai jai manukh"—every human being wears two kinds of clothes—of happiness and sorrow—he passed away in 1664 and before that he had indicated about the successor by merely uttering two words—*Baba Bakaley*—the body of the child Guru was cremated on the bank of Jamuna and this shrine is called gurudwara Bala Sahib.

Another important shrine after his name is that at Panjokhara Sahib in Ambala district. The child

ISLAM

Practising Patience

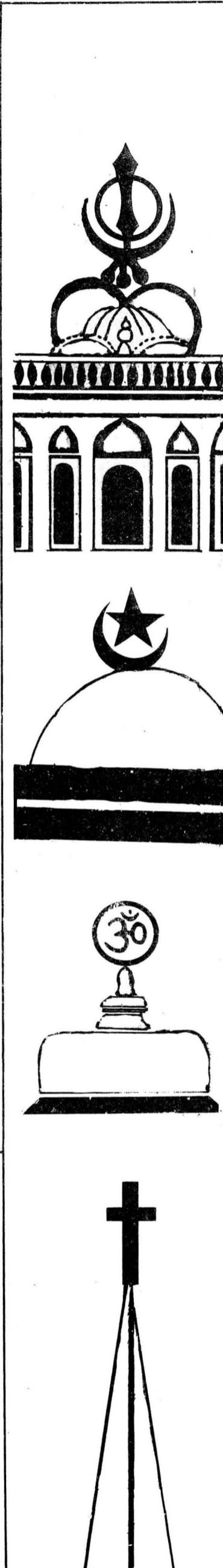
"Then, when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, He said: "O my son! I see in vision that I offer you in sacrifice: Now see what is your view!" (The son) said: "O my father! Do as you are commanded: you will find me, if Allah so wills, one practising patience and constancy!" (37:102)

The story told by the Quran is about two outstanding servants and apostles of Allah-Hazrat Ibrahim and his son Hazrat Ismail (alaihimussalam). Hazrat Ibrahim was born in Iraq then known as Babylon. A true and staunch believer in Allah he surrendered himself completely to the will of his Lord Who therefore praised him as 'Hanif'. Because of his constancy and steadfastness he underwent many a trial on the hands of non-believers and those who made efforts to destroy the balance of justice and emperil humanity on earth but he remained true to his vow to his Lord. At the dusk of his age he was gifted with a son. One could easily imagine what love and affection would have been prevailed there between the son and the father. But one day the father revealed his dream to his son that he was making sacrifice of his son. He said that he was sure he had been commanded to sacrifice his son to the Lord. He asked his son Ismail to express his view on the matter. Pat came the reply from the glorious son. Ismail said that he was fully prepared to endure what had been wished by the Lord. He made it clear to his father that he should go ahead with the command. He further assured that he would certainly abide by the command and willingly bow down to the Will of God. He would keep patience. In the history of mankind this was a unique event when a father and a son had shown total submission to his Lord's will. This should be the cherished climax of a believer.

RADIANCE

Guru was travelling from Kiratpur to Delhi and stayed there for some time. One high time caste Brahmin scholar—too proud and conceited ridiculed, as how a child Guru could occupy the Gaddi of Guru Nanak and had taken for himself the name of Harkrishan. To pacify and convince him Guru ji called one low caste, illiterate and dumb person and by his divine touch and grace this unlettered man confounded the haughty high caste scholar by giving a discourse on one Shloka of Gita. The proud Brahmin was completely baffled and humbled and fell at Guru's feet. Guru granth has a beautiful line about this sort of change—p.1252—"Khal Moorakh Ko Pandit Karbo, Pandit te mughdhari—(Sarang Kabir).

Tanjit Singh (Retd. Principal)



HINDUISM

Three Boons
Sought By A
Great Devotee

A great poet, who distinguished himself as the contributor of one of the monumental scriptural texts, sought three boons from his personal deity. He was afflicted by paralysis on the left side of his body while he experienced unbearable pain on the other half because of arthritis. He remained inside a famous temple in Kerala.

The poet was not concerned about his discomfiture but wanted God to grant him the power to meditate on His dazzling form and retain it in his heart and thus enjoy Bliss. Secondly, when the hour of his quitting the world approached and when his faculties were bound to fail, he should be given the privilege of retaining the power of speech so that he could chant God's names.

Lastly, he said his end should be quiet and sudden, without causing any inconvenience to anyone around. Being confined to bed for a long time will incur the displeasure and contempt of those relatives around. He desired to pass off unnoticed, peacefully and quickly. This famed devotee was Narayana Bhattadri who composed the poem *Narayaneeyam*.

Even while young Bhattadri became an authority on grammar which made him turn a bit haughty. His spiritual mentor asked him to divert his attention to God, making him realise that wealth and wisdom were purposeless when a person did not submit himself to the Almighty. The spiritual guide will be able to lead his disciples to the altar of God and prove His presence in their heart.

Some feel that religious practices can be taken up in their post-retirement period, unaware that even at that stage they will not be able to resist worldly temptations. Detachment should be developed from younger days. Adi Sankara and Vivekananda renounced the world when they were young. The best example of the kind on whom realisation and detachment suddenly dawned was Pattinathar, a wealthy businessman who even owned ships. Lord Siva, appearing as his son took money from him promising to purchase goods but in reality, arranged to fill the vessel with cow dung cakes. The Lord left a note that even an eye-less needle will not accompany him when he dies. Only the fruits of his pious deeds and the sins arising out of misdeeds will follow him. Pattinathar who underwent a total transformation, distributed his wealth, turning an ascetic overnight.

Narayaneeyam's author argued with God that failure on His part to give relief to him from his troubles would only make disbelievers in God taunt him that God has not chosen to shower his mercy and that the prayers offered to a "stone" were but exercises in futility.

CHRISTIANITY

Blessed Are The Poor

What is the secret of happiness?

According to Lord Budha it is detachment. Lord Jesus expresses the same thing in a different way. He says that true happiness belongs to one who is poor in spirit (Mathew 5,3.) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The word 'blessed' is a very special one. It is the Greek word makarios. Makarios means that joy which has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and changes of life. The word poor, ptchos in Greek, describes the man who has nothing at all. Jesus says that blessed is the man who is abjectly and completely destitute.

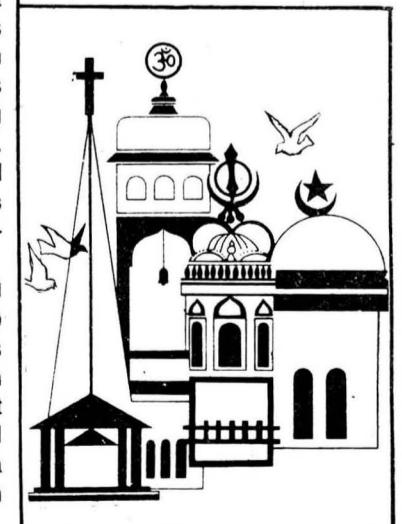
The poor man has no influence or power or prestige. As he has no influence, he is downtrodden and oppressed by men. And since he has no earthly resources whatever, he puts his trust, his whole trust, in God. The poor man, then, is the humble and helpless one who puts his whole trust in God.

Happy then is the man, according to Jesus, who has realized his own utter helplessness, and who has put his whole trust in God.

If a man has realized his own utter helplessness and has put his whole trust in God, there will enter into his life two things which are opposite sides of the same thing. He will become completely detached from things, for he will know that things have not got it in them to bring happiness or security; and he will become completely attached to God, for he will know that God alone can bring him help, and strength. The man who is poor in spirit is the man who has realized that things mean nothing, and that God means everything.

We must be careful not to think that this beatitude calls actual material poverty a good thing. Poverty is not a good thing. It is the aim of the Christian gospel to remove material poverty. The poverty which is blessed is the poverty of spirit, when a man realizes his own utter lack of resources to meet life, and finds his help and strength in God.

- Fr. George



Buyers— Be Conscious

Complaint columns of newspapers are nowadays full of letters seeking justice from the various manufacturers or sellers, who had either cheated their customers or failed to satisfy them. No doubt, this can be taken as an evidence of increasing awareness among the consumers about their rights. But as usual the 'awareness' is restricted to the urban population and that too a small minority among them. A major chunk of our population is totally ignorant about the rights they have as consumers—right to safety, right to choose, right to be informed, right to seek redressal and the right to consumer education, etc. and also, how and where to get these rights enforced.

The Rights

Jhe 'right to safety' means the right to be protected against products, production processes and services which are hazardous to health or life. This has now been broadened to include the concern of consumers' long-term interests also. The 'right to choose' long-term interests also. The 'right to choose' originally, the right to have access to a variety of products and services at competitive prices. But it has now been reformulated as the right to basic goods and services. This is because the unrestrained right of minority to choose can mean for the majority a denial of its fair share. The 'right to redress' means the right to a fair settlement of just claims.

Generally accepted since the early 1970s, the 'right to a healthy environment' means the right to a physical environment that will enhance the quality of life and involves protection against environmental problems over which the individual consumer has no control. Availability of facts needed to make an informed choice or decision is known as the "right to be informed". It now goes beyond avoiding deception and the protection against misleading advertising, labelling or other practices. Then there is the 'right to be heard' which means the right to be represented so that consumers' interests receive full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation and execution of economic policies. The "right to consumer education" means, the right to acquire the knowledge and skills to be an informed consumer throughout life.

The Government accords a high priority to the programme of consumer protection which it conceives as a social movement that seeks to protect and augment the rights of the consumer in relation to the seller.

Educating the consumer about the legal protection available to him is the main task enumerated in the Government programme. Consumer education also enables

a consumer to exercise selection in his purchasing of goods and services. Equally vital is the health and safety of the consumer.

Consumer Protection Act, 1986

Esential Commodities Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, Standards of Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, Bureau of Indian Standards Act, Standards of Weights and Measures Act, MRTP Act, were the legislations that protected the interest of the consumer till 1986. The problem with these laws was that they were either preventive or punitive. It was this that made the Government think in terms of comprehensive Consumer Protection Law.

Thus the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 came into force. This legislation was framed after indepth study of consumer protection laws and managements in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Good features of the legislations in these countries were suitably adapted in the light of social and economic conditions prevailing in this country. Moreover, the provisions of this Act were in addition to all the other laws which looked after the interests of the consumer.

The Act covers complaints relating to defective goods, defective services, unreasonable prices charged in excess of statutory prices, fixed or displayed prices and unfair trade practices other than the monopoly houses covered under the MRTP Act. It applies to all consumer goods and services unless exempted by the Central Government and also covers public, private, joint and cooperative sectors. The most important feature of the Act is that it has got very simple and speedy procedures.

Statutory Institutions

Consumer Protection Councils are to be set up in the Centre and States under the Act, whose main function will be to promote and protect the rights of the consumer. The Central Government has constituted a Central Consumer Protection Council consisting of 126 members and already five meetings of the Council were held. 18 States have also formed State level Councils.

The redressal machinery as per the Act consists of Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum—to be known as District Forums—to be known as State Commission—at the State level and the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission at the National level. District forums and State Commissions are to be set up by the State Governments.

District forums will be having three members. The President of

the forum will be a person who is or has been qualified to be a District Judge. Other members will be a lady social worker and a person eminent in the field of education, trade or commerce. The District

Educating the consumer about the legal protection available to him is the main task enumerated in the Government programme.

ses of a President who is or has been a Judge of the High Court. In addition it has two members and one of them should be a lady member. The jurisdiction of the State Commission will be for compensations worth more than rupee one lakh and less Rs.10 lakhs. It will also be hearing appeals against the decision of the District Forums.

National Commission

The National Commission apart from hearing appeals against the orders of the State Commission will also decide on cases where the compensation claim is more than Rs.10 lakhs. It will be having five members of which the President will be a retired or sitting Judge of the Supreme Court. One of the members will invariably be a woman. Appeals against the decisions of the National Commission are to be made to the Supreme Court. The Central

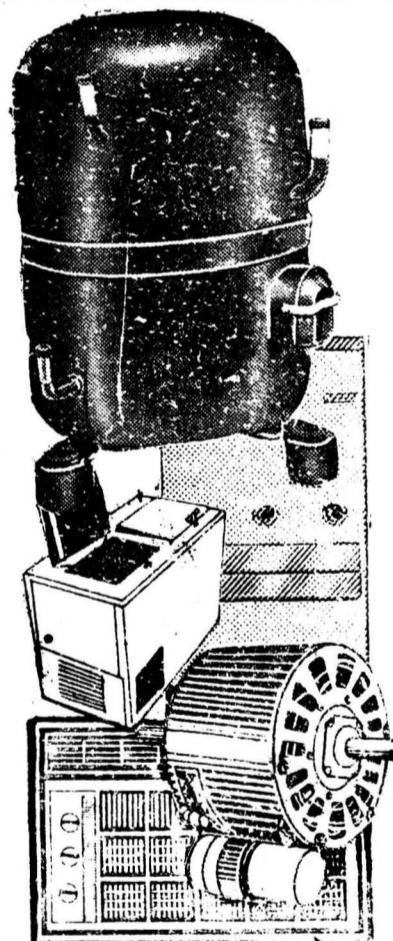
Forum has jurisdiction to entertain complaints where the value of goods or services and compensation, if any, claimed is less than rupees one lakh.

The State Commission compri-

Government has already notified the National Commission which will be headed by Justice V.B. Eradi, a retired Supreme Court Judge.

No doubt a lot is being done by the Government in this direction. So consumers, be aware of your rights and make sure that you enjoy them also. Any number of hindrances can be placed in the path of enjoying these rights. It can be Shri Sanjay Sinha, a Patna journalist who complained to the District Forum against the Railway authorities for charging Rs.1 instead of 50 paise as parking fee for his bike or Justice Udai Sinha, a Judge of the Patna High Court, who filed a petition before the State Commission, complaining against defects in his new Ambassador car. By the way the Railway authorities were asked to ensure that proper parking fees is charged and Justice Sinha got his car back free from all its defects after repairs within 15 days.

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Pollution Exclusive to Women

By N. Bhadran Nair

When we talk about pollution, the immediate thing that comes to one's mind is the smoke emitting automobiles, factories and similar things. But then, there is another little known type of pollution, to which our women folk has been exposed from time immemorial. It is known as domestic pollution and it emanates from our kitchens. Though a lot of study and research are yet to be done in this field, whatever little had been done gives ample evidence to show that domestic pollution causes many a lethal diseases -especially to women, the reason being obvious.

Various Factors

Ninty per cent of the Indian household uses firewood, cowdung and crop residues as fuel. Burning of these fuels produce highly carbonated smokes; continuous respiration of which causes or help to cause many diseases including cancer. The harmful elements from the domestic smoke are the total suspended particles and Benzo (a) pyrene. The recommended limit of the total suspended particles during cooking is 120 - 150 microgrammes/cubic meter. However, in an average rural Indian household, it is about 7,000 microgrammes/cubic meter during cooking hours, which varies from three to six hours a day.

Various factors enhance the density of total suspended particles in the household, the main factor being the size of the kitchen. Most of the houses in the rural areas are small and the provision for ventilation is very negligible. The result is that smoke remains within the dwelling for a long time. The other reason is the use of multimouthed stoves.

Climatic conditions also acts as an impediment in the release of smoke from the cooking place. During winter and rainy seasons, mostly all openings are kept closed as a result of which, the smoke gets blocked within the dwellings. Moreover, the temperature inversion prevents the smoke from rising.

Harmful Effects

The effects of the inhalation of smoke are many. Evidences of the heart disease called 'Pulmonary' has been traced in persons who are exposed to smoke/inhalation smoke, which has till now been found in cigarette smokers only. Studies in the northern part of India and Nepal indicated that persons exposed to such pollution are susceptible to

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chronic bronchitis. It also has an adverse effect on children and infants. One of the main reasons for the high morbidity and mortality rate in infants were found to be acute respiratory infection. It is partially due to irritation caused by such indoor, smoke filled conditions, in the rural areas and urban slums.

Another smoke emitting fuel used extensively in the rural areas of India is biomass. Biomass release carbon monoxide and formaldehyde when burned. Carbon monoxide is a toxic gas, which reduces the haemoglobin content in blood. Inhalation of carbon monoxide continuously also leads to heart diseases and impair foetal development.

It is a well known fact that the immunity power of anaemic persons is very less. In India, it is estimated that 40-50 per cent pre-school children, 25-30 per cent women in reproductive age and almost 50 per cent pregnant women are anaemic. The harmful effect of carbon monoxide on our rural women and children can be roughly gauged from the above data.

Formaldehyde, too, highly harmful. It causes irritation in the eyes, nose and throat. It poisons the lung tissues and would exacerbate skin wounds. As exposure to cigarette smoke during pregnancy increases the risk to mother and child, women using biomass as cooking fuel also are exposed to similar health hazards. Excess and continuous exposure to wood smoke would also increase the chances of chronic obstructive lung diseases, heart diseases like car-pulmonary, cancer, particularly lung and nasopharyngeal, acute respiratory diseases.

Smokeless chulhas

The first and foremost solution to this problem is to minimise usage of fuelwood and biomass for cooking. An additional benefit of such a measure would be lesser pressure on our already depleted forest lands. Kerosene, liquid

petroleum gas and electricity should be supplied to our rural areas without any disruption.

Another important and feasible solution is to popularise the smokeless stoves. Smokeless chulhas have been made and further improved upon by many energy conservation and research institutions like the Tata Energy Research Institute, Pondicherry, Central Power Research Institute, Bangalore, etc.

Alongwith extensive use of smokeless chulhas, the kitchens of our rural areas should have to be slightly improved upon to incorporate proper ventilation, so that whatever smoke forms inside the kitchen should be freely released outside. Installation of biogas plants in rural houses is another step which should be popularised. It is economical too, as biogas plants could provide electricity, cooking fuel and manure.

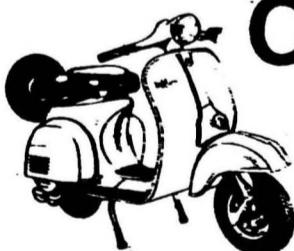
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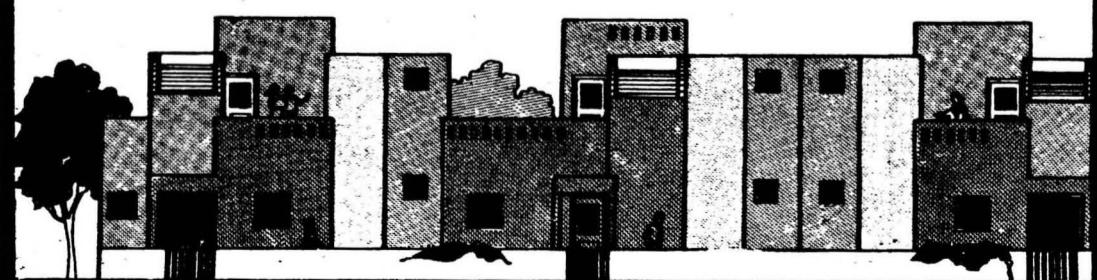
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Drug Trafficking

A Psycho-Socio-Medico Problem

The problem of drug trafficking and its misuse is a multi-dimensional one and has assumed dangerous proportions. India has become a transit point of narcotic drugs because of its geographical location. The Golden Triangle consisting of Thailand, Burma and Laos and the Golden Crescent consisting of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran—the major producers of narcotic drug and psychotropic substances in the world—have common borders with India. The Indo-Burmese border is about 1,000 kms long and India's common border with Pakistan extends to 3310 kms.

Illicit drugs from these countries are smuggled into India which not only find their way to lucrative Western markets, but also provide an impetus to consumers of these drugs in the country itself.

The Golden Triangle, the Golden Crescent, and Nepal in Asia and Mexico, Colombia and other countries in the Americas are the chief producers of narcotic drugs. The hilly terrains and deep forests of Burma bordering China and Thailand are famous for poppy cultivation. It was reported that in 1986-87, the production jumped to a record 850 tonnes. This is likely to cross the 1,000 tonnes mark soon.

The Golden Crescent roughly represents Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The political turmoil in Afghanistan and the revolution in Iran have somewhat adversely affected the growth and trafficking of drugs in this region. This however has led to a new development. The tribal areas of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan and the North-Western regions of Pakistan have now emerged as one of the chief producers of narcotic substances. Today, most of the heroin which comes to India from this region. Nepal is also playing no less an important role in this field, and has become the chief producer of cannabis in this region.

India has also been cultivating opium for meeting her medical requirements under strict licensing. However, in view of the boom in illicit distillation for the preparation of narcotic drugs, illicit cultivation of opium and cannabis has also increased substantially in different parts of the country.

Illegal drug manufacturing units have been unearthed at Bareilly and Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh, Mandsur in Madhya Pradesh and Anderi in Bombay.

Big Money In Trafficking

The sinister and unholy alliance between terrorists and drug traffickers has become an international problem. The terrorists have found in drug trafficking big money

which would enable them to procure more lethal weapons. A kilogram of heroine smuggled into New York fetches as much as Rupees one crore. No wonder that terrorists have taken to this source of earning a fast buck. The people who abet this criminal action are unaware that this may dehumanise and degenerate their own kith and kin in the process by reducing the youth to zombies.

agencies, results in the form of prize catches have been achieved in the last few years. In January, 1986, 602 kgs. of heroin and 4565 kgs. of hashish were seized from a truck in a farm house near Bombay and in August 1986, 472 kgs. of heroin alongwith 1041 kgs. of hashish were seized from a truck in Bombay city.

The fight against drug trafficking has to be taken up at the regional

more vigorously pursued in the coming years to contain the menace of drug trafficking. Like all transit countries India is also facing the dangerous consequence of increasing drug abuse among the local population which of course can be checked only with the active cooperation of the people at large. The Ministry of Welfare has been entrusted with the task of Drug Abuse Preven-

Several steps have been taken to solve this psycho-socio-medico problem. A community-based approach has been adopted for the purpose to enable society to strengthen itself to deal with this macabre problem. It is a multi-dimensional, multi-faceted approach involving medical detoxification of addicts and their rehabilitation. This is because the addict not only suffers from physical dependence but also psychological dependence. He has to be motivated to be de-addicted in the first instance. Pre and post detoxification counselling for becoming drug free is very essential.

The modus operandi is to involve voluntary organisations in the whole process which includes counselling, de-addiction, and after-care services. As many as 67 voluntary organisations in different parts of the country are given grants-in-aid to encourage their activities towards the prevention of drug abuse and for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

It goes to the credit of the Government and voluntary agencies that a fair amount of success has been achieved in the creation of social awareness on Drug Menace in the country. It is gratifying to see more and more voluntary agencies coming forward to check this menace which has the potential of reducing large sections of our people into worthless zombies.

Legislation

India is a signatory of 1961 and 1971 United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The signatories have enacted several laws to check the growing menace of drug trafficking and drug abuse. India enacted the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in the year 1985. This law has been recently amended to give more teeth to it by including provisions like death penalty on second conviction, the forfeiture of property, the non-remission of sentence, the setting up of special courts and the pre-trial disposal of seized drugs. The amended Act has come into effect from May 29, this year.

In fact death penalty is what awaits offenders caught for the first time in several other countries like Iran and Malaysia.

Narcotic Control Bureau

A nodal agency, the Narcotic Control Bureau was set up by the Central Government to coordinate the activities of various enforcement agencies involved in drug-trafficking. The main functions of the Bureau are to coordinate all enforcement activities of central and State authorities, to provide assistance and cooperation in the regional and international arena, and to coordinate the actions of different ministries which deal with detoxification, treatment and rehabilitation of drug abuse victims. A large number of Central and State agencies have also been empowered to investigate offences relating to drug trafficking which include the police, customs and Central Excise.

As a result of the enforcement of rules and regulations and the concerted efforts of the various

national, national and international level. Cooperation from the source countries is a must. India had initiated bilateral talks in this regard with Pakistan in 1987, and arrangements are there with Nepal and Sri Lanka for checking smuggling. Arrangements for exchange of any related intelligence with Burma and Thailand are in the offing. There is also an arrangement with the United States of America through a 'working group on narcotics' for exchange of information in drug related matters. These activities have to be

tion. It is now an accepted fact that drug abuse has proliferated amongst all classes of people. A situation has now arisen where the problem is not confined to individuals or even to individual families. It has acquired dangerous proportions and has now become a social problem. In fact combined with the problem of illicit cultivation of opium, cannabis and such plants from which narcotic drugs are derived is the problem of illicit trafficking of the same along with chemically prepared psychotropic substances.

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Professor Words

It is very important to use right words in the right contexts.

'A word out of season may mar the course of a whole life'.

The ability to make the right use of words is not inherited from ancestors or received as a gift from the gods. It is acquired and developed by study. Some words present greater difficulties and require more study than other words.

Here I will deal with some words that need special study and constant watching.

Hotchpot—Hotchpotch:

These terms are not interchangeable. *Hotchpot* is a technical law term meaning a blending of property into a common lot for purposes of an equitable division

Hotchpotch is the general term meaning a confused mixture, a jumble, a stew, or a medley. *Hodgepodge* is a variant of hotchpotch.

Sunlight-Sinshine:

Sunlight is the light produced by the sun. *Sunshine* is usually understood to be the direct rays of the sun together with the light and heat that they produce in a specific place. We sit in the sunshine.

Still Continue—Continue:

The expression *still continue* is redundant since *continue* contains the idea of still. Say "He is continuing his work".

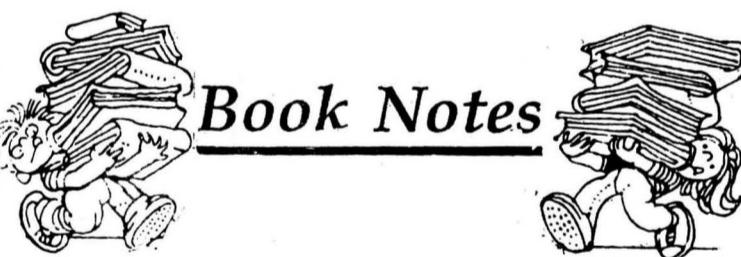
Past History—History:

"He told the court his whole *past history*." What other kind could he tell? *History* means past events; therefore past is superfluous.

Kindly—Please:

Kindly is often misused for *please*, especially in business correspondence. *Kindly* means in a kind manner. It is hardly appropriate to ask one's correspondent to answer, investigate, or pay in a kind manner. Say "Please look into this"; "Please answer at once."

Book Notes



- A bookworm is not only a person who likes to read books. It is also an insect larva that feeds on the paste and bindings of a book.
- The largest dictionary in the world is the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It consists of 15,487 pages in 12 volumes.
- The longest sentence written in a novel is in *Absalom, Absalom!*, a novel by the American author William Faulkner. There are 1,300 words in the sentence.
- The first book club established in the US was the Book-of-the Month Club. It was started in 1926 with 4,750 members.
- The first cookbook printed in the world was published in Italy in 1475. Platina, a Vatican librarian, wrote the book and titled it *Concerning Honest Pleasure and Well Being*. The instructions for cooking larks' tongues and hummingbird livers are among the recipes.
- The *Encyclopedie Britannica* was first printed in England in 1771. Three Scotsmen, Andrew Bell, Colin Macfarquhar, and William Smellie compiled this distinguished book of information. *Britannica* is the oldest continually published reference book in the English language.
- An *American Dictionary of the English Language* was published in two volumes by Noah Webster in 1828 after many years of study. He studied 26 languages to find the origin of the 70,000 words in his American dictionary. Webster "Americanized" the spelling of many words. For example, he changed the British spelling of *colour* to the American spelling *color*.

DID YOU KNOW?

Why distances are measured in metres?

Throughout the centuries there have been many and varied systems of measurement. Gradually, however, man realized that if he wished to measure the things which interested him with any degree of accuracy he would have to use a constant unit of measurement.



which did not form a constant unit.

The litre, the unit for measuring capacity in the metric system, is very closely linked to the metre. It is, in fact, the capacity of a container in the shape of a cube with sides measuring one decimetre, that is one-tenth of a metre. The litre is equal to about one and three-quarter points.

The litre was too small and inconvenient to measure the contents of a large tank and multiples are therefore used: the decalitre or 10 litres and the hectolitre or 100 litres.

For measurements smaller than a litre we use the decilitre or one-tenth of litre and the centilitre or one-hundredth of a litre.



Why weights are measured in grammes?

It is probable that the need for a unit of weight was only clearly realized when trading in precious metals began. It was one thing to calculate the approximate weight of a sack of corn or a calf but quite a different matter to work out the weight of a quantity of gold, silver or precious stones.

There are many things which seem to point to the fact that the first measurements of weight were very small. Even today we use the grain for weighing precious stones and metals. In oriental countries the carob seed was used for centuries as a unit of weight and diamonds, other gems and pearls are still weighed in carats, which is a derivation from the name of the carob seed.

The decimal metric system devised in France gives us the gramme as the unit of weight. Of course in weighing we also need a range of submultiples and multiples in order to cover very tiny amounts of poisons, medicine, precious stones, etc. and enormous quantities, for example, of large animals, machinery and ships.

STILL IN MYSTERY

Mystery of the Mary Celeste



On 5 December 1872, the crew of the *Dei Gratia* sighted a two-masted square rigger that was steering in a rather haphazard fashion. A signal was sent, but there was no reply from the silent vessel. The captain and the mate then rowed over to the ship and climbed aboard. What they found has since proved to be one of the greatest mysteries of the sea.

The vessel was in the middle of

the Atlantic, miles from any land, but there was no one on board. When the men entered the captain's cabin, they found that the table had been laid for breakfast and there was half-eaten food on the plates. Everything on board seemed quite normal; there was nothing to explain where the crew had gone, or why. To this day no one has given a plausible answer to this maritime puzzle.

—Compiled by AC Razia

Sanctions Against South Africa Cricket And the Sports Boycott

By Sam Ramsamy

In January this year, England finally conceded that the links its cricketers have with apartheid South Africa had to be abandoned if it is to continue harmonious exchanges with the rest of the world. As a result, the 25 countries attending the International Cricket Conference Special Meeting in London voted unanimously to impose a ban on cricketers who in future maintain links with apartheid sport.

The ban, which came into effect on April 1st, is bound to act as a deterrent to English cricketers who look to South Africa for off-season sunshine and earnings. Any cricketer who visits South Africa, as player, coach or administrator, now faces automatic suspension from representative cricket. This applies also to any exchange taking place outside South Africa with a team consisting mainly of South Africans. The ban is to last for three years if the defaulter is under 19, and four if he is over 19. Anyone who has been a member of a rebel touring team will be banned for five years.

Since 1980, the Black Test-playing countries within the International Cricket Conference (ICC), the world cricket governing body, have been campaigning to exclude from representative cricket anyone who takes part in sports events in South Africa. The overwhelming majority of ICC member nations were in favour of imposing the ban, but the opposition of England had to be overcome, as England holds a veto vote at ICC meetings.

When the ICC was established in 1909, veto votes were given to the three founding members: England, Australia and South Africa.

Until July 1965, the Conference was known as the Imperial Cricket Conference, and only Commonwealth countries could become members; and so, when South Africa was forced to leave the Commonwealth in 1961, it had to give up its membership of the ICC. Therefore, only England and Australia were left with the vital veto vote. South Africa tried many times to regain affiliation to the ICC, but was continuously blocked by India, Pakistan and the West Indies, the major Black Test-playing countries.

Guyana Takes A Stand

Guyana became the first country to demonstrate its anti-apartheid stance, when, in 1980, it barred a member of the England touring team scheduled to play a Test match in Georgetown. Thereafter, England became a centre of focus, and English tours of India and the West Indies were often marked by protests. The pace set by Guyana gained momentum, and soon Bangladesh and Bermuda refused to allow anyone with South African ties to play cricket in their countries.

England was the only major cricket-playing country to insist on selecting players for its national teams irrespective of their links with apartheid South Africa. The English Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) fabricated a series of pretexts for continuing links with apartheid cricket, claiming that it was not possible to curb the flow of cricketers to South Africa. The pretexts ranged from the old-fashioned 'libertarian' principle of allowing freedom of movement to citizens, to not wanting to get involved in legal arguments regarding so-called restraint of trade legislation were exaggerated beyond all proportion.

The matter came to a head in 1988, when England was scheduled to tour India. At least eight members of the touring squad had played in South Africa, and this was unacceptable to India. England refused to replace these cricketers and the tour was cancelled.

Support For India

England then tried to get New Zealand to organise a triangular tournament involving Pakistan; an event designed to compensate for the loss of the Indian tour. This backfired badly because Pakistan, also known for its opposition to apartheid, refused to participate in the event.

The New Zealand Government and the national anti-apartheid organisation, Halt All Racist Tours (HART) said at that time that the English tour would be an insult to India and the international anti-apartheid campaign, and that it would seriously undermine efforts by the ICC countries to impose sanctions against South African cricket. HART threatened widespread demonstrations if the tour went ahead. This forced the New Zealand cricket authorities to

withdraw the invitation.

The English tour to the West Indies, scheduled for 1989-90, was also in jeopardy.

The threat of a total boycott of England teams was now very real. There were to be no more tours of the Black nations, and it would not have needed much pressure for Australia and New Zealand to fall into line. Faced with the threat of isolation, England had to succumb. At the ICC meeting on January 23rd-24th, England accepted the proposal to ban players going to South Africa after April.

The decision, backed by all ICC countries, was greeted as bad news by the supporters of the White-controlled South African Cricket Union. They felt shocked and disappointed that their long-time ally, England, had finally been forced to abandon them.

The anti-apartheid South African Cricket Board, however, welcomed the ban as a major gain in the protracted campaign against South Africa's 'cheque-book' cricket offensive.

Lord's Test— A Statistical View

Continued from page 16

against all countries is: Played 487, won 199, lost 143, drawn 145 including two tied matches. England's playing record is: Played 653, won 230, lost 176, drawn 247.

- Gower won the toss for the second time and elected to bat.

His captaincy record now read—16 defeats, five victories and seven draws in a total of 28 matches.

- England made four changes from the first Test team: Mike Gatting, John Embury, Jarvis and Dilley replacing Lamb, D. Pringle, P. Newport and P. Defractas.

- For England, opener G. Gooch scored 60 & 0 in the two innings. It marked his 29th fifty and ninth zero.

- Gower scored 57 and 106—his 36th fifty and 15th century.

- Robin Smith's 96 in the second innings in his highest score surpassing 66 in the first Test. This is his third fifty in Test cricket.

- For Australia, David Boon scored 94 and 58 not out which are his 12th and 13th fifties in Test cricket.

- Captain Allan Border missed the coveted 8,000 mark by seven runs. He needed 43 runs to touch the mark but could score only 35 and one in his two innings.

- Mark Taylor followed up his first Test heroics of 136 and 60 with 62 and 27 in this Test.

- Steve Waugh also followed his first Test century with 152 and 21 in this Test. He has now aggregated 350 runs without being dismissed.

- Geoff Lawson scored 74 in the first innings which is his highest score in Test cricket, surpassing the previous best of 57 not out.

- Terry Alderman bagged 3 wickets for 60 runs and 6 wickets for 128 runs in the two innings. His haul of 6/128 is the eighth time of his pocketing half the side. When he took his first wicket in the second innings, he completed his 100 victims in Test cricket. He is the 22nd Australian to capture three digital wickets. With a haul of 10/151 in the first Test, he has aggregated to 19 wickets for 339 runs in the two Tests and overall, his analysis read 105 wickets for 3105 runs in 26 Tests.

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Border Crosses Another Landmark

By Navin Chand

Allan Border, the Australian captain and dependable middle-order batsman, is inching towards the Sunil Gavaskar's all-time high record of 10,122 runs. And in this race, he has an edge over the rest of the contemporary cricketers namely, Vivian Richards, Javed Miandad and David Gower.

goodbye to Test cricket.

Indian opener, Sunil Gavaskar, outdid both of them and became the third member of the august body. The little master set an all time high Himalayan record of 10,122 runs from 125 Tests/214 innings. Now four cricketers are in neck to neck race to catch up the record of Indian run-machine.

Obviously Border enjoys an

Brearley's otherwise triumphant English side even though Allan's personal contribution was only 29 and zero run out.

Border took over the captaincy in 1984 when Kim Hughes suddenly resigned after two consecutive defeats against the touring Caribbean team. The young Border, leading Australia for the first time, surprised the cricket-pundits by winning the last Test against West Indies and thereby preventing another total-wash.

A remarkable aspect of Border's batting is that he has the temperament and undoubted skills to stay at the crease. He is elegant, dedicated, determined and has worked diligently to become the mainstay of Australian batting. Quite many a times, he had been instrumental in lifting the side from a wretched start to height of glory.

Nevertheless, in the current series, Border is heading towards personal glory.

In the first innings of the third Test against England at Edgbaston, Border achieved another landmark in his illustrious career when he completed his personal aggregate of 8,000 runs in Test cricket. He now joins the elite club of three other cricketers who have scored over 8,000 runs.

In the first innings of the third Test against England at Edgbaston, Border achieved another landmark in his illustrious career when he completed his personal aggregate of 8,000 runs in Test cricket. He got this mark when his score reached seven out of his Innings of eight runs. It was his 104th Test and 184th innings for Australia.

Border now joins the elite club of three other cricketers who have scored over 8,000 runs in Test cricket. The first cricketer to achieve the mark was Sir Gary Sobers of West Indies. The legendary left-handed all rounder scored 8,032 runs from 93 Tests/160 innings before retiring from Test cricket in the early seventies.

Goeff Boycott, the former opener of England, was the second cricketer to cross the landmark. He broke Sobers' record and set another record of 8,114 runs from 108 Tests/193 innings before disputes with the authorities forced him to bid

edge over others with 8,001 runs from 104 Tests/184 innings. Vivian Richards of West Indies is second in the line with 7849 runs from 108 Tests/161 innings. Javed Miandad of Pakistan is not far behind. He has 7422 runs from 97 Tests/148 innings. David Gower, the captain of English team against Border's Aussies, is not out of the race as many would believe it to be. He has also crossed 7000 runs in Tests and by the end of the current series, should be able to catch with Pakistan middle order batsman.

Born on July 27, 1955, in Cremorne, a tranquil fashionable northern harbourside suburb of Sydney, Allan heralded his arrival in international cricket in 1978, when the majority of the established Australians were lured away by the Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket. It was a chance that young Border grabbed without any mistake. His debut seemed a happy poten for the match was won against Mike



Allan Border

Lord's Test—A Statistical View



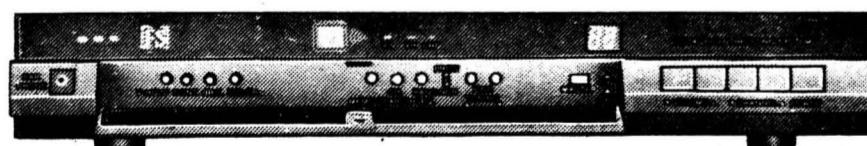
The second Test between England and Australia played at Lord's, London from June 22 to 27, ended in six-wicket victory for

the visitors. Australia now lead 2-0 in the six-Tests series. This is the first time since 1948, that the Australian side has won two consecutive Tests in a series in England.

- This was the 1122nd international Test in chronological order and 265th match between the two teams. Australia have an edge with 99 victories against 88 defeats with 78 Tests drawn against England.
- Australia's overall playing record

Continued on page 15

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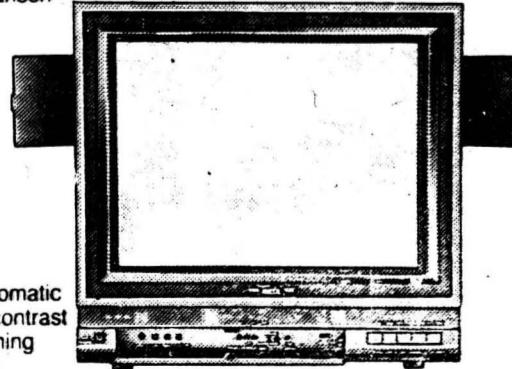


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